

Self-Portrait as Mountains Surrounding a Dry Lakebed

Forget that no one asks to be here, fault & collision.

Forget that I seem incapable of suffering, am
liable to break. The word fragile, the word

impassable, forget words simple, stranded as bones

I cannot swallow. Begging & tenor, the mono-
Chrome Flats as tender ice Earth seems to be

curving away. What isn't snow is salt. What isn't

light is blinding. What isn't language is flesh
cut of the moon slowly rolling. A dying

lake can never recite every night every name

every star a blade dulled against another
ox's rib cage. Let there be no cairn

to the jagged trail of wagons. No line no child

draws in the sand. No, picture lonely more
precise. I have seen the smallest ones

urged first with gaunt & watering cheeks

to the bodies of the dead, crying *forgive me*
father, as mother turns away to chew

his last shoelace. The fire will roar but I cannot

stop the freeze, her turn, the sleep she'll sleep
without feeling both feet burn.

Char that I never sorry to say, I plead. Winds

from such a height they never end. Winds
from such a height I never asked.